

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for handling jobs within a computer system, comprising the
2 steps of:

3 providing a plurality of work items, each work item representing a job to be
4 performed, each work item including a category, state, and change history;

5 placing each work item into one of a plurality of queues;

6 in turn, opening each work item in a queue, and executing one or more
7 tasks on the item; and

8 after executing the tasks, if the job represented by a work item is complete
9 archiving the work item, and if the job is not yet complete, placing the work item
10 into a queue.

1 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of executing a task includes the
2 step of modifying the work item.

1 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of executing a task includes the
2 step of sending an e-mail to a person.

1 4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of executing a task includes the
2 step of sending a fax to a person.

1 11. A system for handling jobs within a computer system, comprising:
2 a plurality of queues;
3 a plurality of work items, each representing a job to be performed, each
4 work item having a category, a state, and a history;
5 a plurality of composite actions, each defining one or more tasks to be
6 executed with respect to a work item.

1 12. The system of Claim 11, wherein each composite action includes a rule to
2 be evaluated, and at least two sets of tasks to be performed depending on the
3 outcome of the evaluation.

1 13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the rule evaluates to a value of true or
2 false.

1 14. The system of Claim 13, further including a set of rules to be evaluated if
2 there is no rule to be evaluated.

1 15. The system of Claim 11, wherein the work items each further include an
2 identification of a party that created the work item.

